

NEBRASKA:

10

A POEM,

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL.

—

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N E B R A S K A .

P A R T I .

THE granite giant, whose imperial brow
Shone like the moon amid his night of hair,
And whose magnetic eyes pierced through the veil
Which hides the future from the vulgar gaze,
Sleeps on the borders of the broad, deep sea,
Where winds and waves his requiem sing for aye!
O that the deep unto the deep could call
In tones of startling thunder, and awake
The mighty man who slumbers softly there,
That he might rise, and in the nation's ear
Unsay the words in which his heart beat not, —
Words stereotyped to yokes upon the necks
Of slaves beneath the flag of stripes and stars, —
And then, with his surpassing power of speech,
Rebuke ambitious traitors, who would sell
Their country as they sell their countrymen!
If that nerculean arm could rend the shroud,
And shake the temple of our Capitol,
Where base conspirators betray our rights,

Then Freedom would not there be stultified.
We need a Daniel to translate the fire
Which burns upon the walls at Washington,
Where proud Belshazzar, steeped in wine, reads not
The fearful fate which threatens to destroy
The mad assassins of our liberty.
Could we but roll the stone from Calhoun's grave,
And find a shade or spirit sitting there,
No one would dare to drive the rusty nails
Through Freedom's shrinking sinews on the cross,
Nor put upon her head the crown of thorns,
Nor shroud her in the mocking robe of scorn,
Nor pierce her broken heart with cruel speech.
He would have cursed the leprous lips that dared
Betray fair Freedom with a Judas' kiss ;
His fiery glance would shrivel up the hand
Reached forth to break the seal of compromise ;
He would have scorned to own a slave so mean
As sneaking senators who strive to sell,
For silver pieces, pottage, place, or power,
The birthright of a nation like our own ;
His burning logic, winged with words of fire,
Would scathe the demagogues like light from heaven.
We weep between the altar and the porch
To think a man who led so pure a life,
A life so constant and so free from cant,
Made merchandise of men, and owned a troop
Of slaves ; but why shed tears upon his grave ?
O, let us rather weep because no man
In Carolina South has yet been found
With ample shoulders broad enough to wear
The mighty mantle he has left behind.
The gallant sage of Ashland died too soon

To save the senate from disgrace and shame.
We miss his manly form and magic voice,
And sorely need his thrilling eloquence.
Although the parent of a "Compromise"
Which might have made a northern doughface blush,
He would not sacrifice his plighted faith ;
Although he oft defended slavery,
He'd tie no curse to territories free.
Unlike the chivalrous Kentuckian,
The "little giants" who come after him
Would smooth the way and open wide the gate
For servitude to curse the soil that's free.
Behold them braiding scourges for the backs
Of unborn millions of the human race ;
Their bunkum speeches are drowned in the din
Of galling fetters, which they forge for men.
There is Nebraska as Eden was
Before the Arnolds and the fiends below
Made Eve and Adam break their compromise.
Now let us climb Nebraska's loftiest mount,
And from its summit view the scenes below.
The morn comes like an angel down from heaven ;
Its radiant face is the unclouded sun ;
Its outspread wings the overarching sky ;
Its voice the charming minstrels of the air ;
Its breath the fragrance of the bright, wild flowers.
O blessed day ! rich gift of God to man ;
Brimful of beauty to delight the eye,
And thrilling music to enchant the ear ;
It lights me to the unreturning past —
A dreary waste, where other days have fled
With the dear souls they pioneered to heaven.
The past is night, in which these souls are stars !

Like flocks of migratory birds awing,
The by-gone days sweep o'er the sea of time.
On, on to the eternal shore they speed :
One is baptized with sad and bitter tears,
And bears an arrow 'neath its bleeding wing ;
One, crimsoned o'er with battle's bloody stain,
Utters a nation's agonizing shriek ;
One, scarred and battered by the winds and waves,
Sobs out the grief of shipwrecked mariners.
Ay, life would fail to name disastrous days,
Days red and reeking with the foulest deeds,
Days the bright stars mistook for blackest night.
But lo, amid the flying flock I see,
Like doves with rooks, fair golden days like this,
Filled to the sunset with the song of larks,
And wreathed with roses to the morning's rim,
Blue with bland sky and crowned with glorious light,
And starred all over with the noblest deeds.
'Tis God who lifts the window and sends forth
The raven, night, on its eternal course,
And the fair dove of day with leaves of peace
From his celestial Ararat on high.
'Tis but a step on such a morn as this
From hill sod to the condescending sky.
O glorious world, afloat in golden air !
Behold the prairie, broad, and wild, and free ;
Ocean of emerald grass and golden flowers ;
'Tis God's own garden, unprofaned by man ;
There the meek grass with its green finger points
To Him who feeds it, with his hand in clouds ;
'Tis there the rainbow-tinted flowers send up
Their offerings rich of purest, sweetest balm ;
The yellow bee hums out his drowsy song

Upon the bosom of the wild white rose ;
There, striped with green and gold, the serpent glides,
With deadly venom 'neath his tongue of fire,
Dangerous as malice hid in compliments ;
And showers of insects, fluttering in the air
On gauzy wings, so various dyed they seem
The happy offspring of the gorgeous flowers.

Gay birds, like wingéd blossoms filled with song,
Pour forth their roundelays from morn till eve.
The robin, bard of birds, whose ardent hymn
Swells out upon his radiant breast of flame,
Builds here his neat round nest and rears his brood.
That jewel of the air, the oriole,
Bright drops of sky and sunshine turned to song,
Hangs his moss cradle on the lonely tree ;
And there God rocks it with his mighty hand,
And watches it with all the stars of heaven.
The prairie lark, perched on some towering stem
That lifts its crimson bells above the grass
As a tall steeple rises in the town,
Is prairie sexton, ringing up the sun.

Swift o'er this sea of fragrant beauty skims
The twittering swallow in pursuit of food,
Plunging no deeper than the critics dip
In th' unappreciated page they cut.
There chants the blackbird in his sable plumes,
A bit of last night tangled in the bush.
The thrush, the jay, the linnet, and the wren
Are prima donnas holding concerts there ;
While, like a speck between the earth and sky,
The soaring eagle, royal king of birds,
Poised on his wings, calmly surveys the scene.

Yonder behold the monarchs of the wood ;

For ages have they battled with the storm,
The envious clouds have pelted them with hail,
The lightning pierced them with its quivering lance,
And the fierce whirlwind wrenched them in its wrath.
As mortals, chastened by affliction's rod,
Grow firmer and grow faster in the faith,
So these tall Titans of the forest glade
Are stronger for their struggle with the storm.
When at their feet their predecessors fell
Spring covered their remains with mourning moss,
And wrote their epitaph in pale wood flowers,
And gave sweet berries to the gentle birds
To stay and sing their sad, sweet requiem.
These trees are throned upon their fathers' graves,
And the same sun that cheered th' ancestral stems
Bathes all the sylvan wood in golden light.
I love to gaze up at the grand old trees,
And hear the rustling talk of whispering leaves,
As mortals softly speak the tenderest vows
With lip to lip and arm encircling arm.
I've seen them clad in Autumn's golden pomp,
When blushing leaves were red as flakes of fire,
And the deserted nest in silence swayed
Like a sad heart beneath a royal scarf.
And when their crowns of emerald and gold
Shivered, and, scattered by assaulting winds,
Had left them in their leafless poverty,
I've seen their trembling branches, bare and brown,
Lifted like stricken arms in humble prayer.
The trees have taught me unforgotten lore
In winter, when the hills were wrapped in snow
And looked like giants slumbering in their shrouds,
Each tree a crystal chandelier ablaze ;

The towering pine, with its tall plume of green,
Without a sear leaf, smiled upon the wood
As Hope smiles in the winter of despair.
So have I seen a lofty nature rise,
His feet on earth, his head beyond the clouds,
When a dumb nation, to the vitals froze,
Shining and shivering, stood in clanking chains :
He was the mainmast of our country's ship.
To me the branches of the wildwood trees
Are ladder rounds, such as the patriarch saw
In holy dreams, reaching from earth to heaven,
And filled with angel messengers of light.

From the green woods uprise spontaneous songs,
Which fill the gaping space with grateful joy ;
Blossoms like blazing censers fill the air
With sweetest fragrance, and the balmy sky
Seems an inverted flower of blue and gold.
Meanwhile, yon river, like a constant heart,
Pours forth a hymn as copious as its flood,
Unchecked by flowers coquetting on its banks.
That stream reflects the glory of the day,
A silver thread, strung with sun, moon, and stars,
And wound about the landscape's verdant waist.
Glide on, sweet river, with enchanting song,
And teach thy lesson to the earth and sea,
Progressive, yet confined within the path
Traced by the hand that poured it from the hills,
Save when a shower gift fills its breast with joy,
As blessings falling like the rain from heaven
O'erflow the purest hearts with gratitude,
Harmless when unobstructed in its course,
But terrible when hindered on its way,
Foaming and roaring with a host of waves !

Winter may bind him fast with crystal chains ;
In spring he'll strew the banks with icy gyves,
Then rush forth, shouting, to the ocean's arms,
Exchanging snow wreaths for a crown of shells.
I love to stand upon the grassy brink
Of the meandering stream, and in its depths
Behold the fishes flash in green and gold,
As though they were the flood's imbodied thought.
Fair land of silver streams and mountains green,
Of boundless prairies and pellucid lakes,
Of rocks, and hills, and plains, and woodlands wild,
Shall Slavery clank her galling fetters here ?
Or Freedom wave her starry flag for aye,
And make these forests blossom like the rose,
And build great cities on these fertile plains,
And launch her floating fabrics on these waves,
While streams are serfs to turn the busy mills
Which soon must wall the waters of the west ?
Yes ; here let towering domes and tapering spires
Ascend above the tree tops' dizzy height ;
Here let the hum of honest industry
Be heard in busy hives where freemen toil ;
While schools are filled with troops of rosy youth,
And peace and plenty smile at every door.
May Temperance, like the watchful angel armed
With sword of flame at Eden's guarded gate,
Protect this pleasant garden of the west ;
May meek Religion, pure and undefiled,
Lead the young nations born and cradled here
In Wisdom's straight and narrow path of peace.
The day is near when towers and towns will rise
Like magic in this new and vast domain,
And iron threads, thick strung with villages,

Will stretch from boundary to border line ;
While ships, like shuttles, fly from shore to shore,
Weaving the eastern warp with western woof.
Methinks I see the forest bow before
The sharp axe swinging in the settler's hand ;
The Indian corn springs up with silken plume,
And fills his ample barn with golden ears ;
White wagons trundle through the winding lanes.
Soon horn responds to horn, and farm joins farm ;
Rude huts, like birdless nests, are tenantless ;
While mansions fair are zoned with fruit and bloom,
And filled with good Nebraskians, who are free !
The horse with lungs of fire and ribs of steel,
And mane of smoke and nerves of shining wire,
Goes thundering past in haste on burning wheels,
Like an express from Erebus to earth.

With heart of fire and joints of steel,
With sighing valve and groaning wheel,
With startling scream and sweeping stroke,
With showers of sparks and clouds of smoke,
The iron steed the train is bringing ;
So look out while the bell is ringing !

A sheet of fire illumines the track
When Night reigns in her tent of black ;
And so the progress of reform
Sweeps on through cloud, and sun, and storm.
'Tis Freedom's song the mass are singing ;
So look out while the bell is ringing !

The slave will doff his yoke and chain ;
The drunkard will not drink again ;

The soldier flings his sword away ;
We see the dawn of that glad day !
Good news the harnessed lightning's bringing ;
So look out while the bell is ringing !

PART II.

As Satan came to paradise arrayed
In serpent's skin of green and starry gold
To mar the beauty of that fair domain,
So Douglas, in false colors robed, appeared,
And pointed to the fruit on Freedom's tree,
Inviting Eve (the south) to taste the fruit,
And Adam, too, (the north,) to eat and live ;
When lo, the people spake the voice of God,
And said to all the world, in thunder words,
"The day ye eat thereof ye surely die."
The chosen champion of this wicked work,
Without the stature of a full-grown man
Or mind of more than common calibre,
Is falsely called the "Giant of the West!"
And yet this Tom Thumb Titan is not seen
Save when he climbs upon a negro's back,
Or struts and spouts upon an auction block —
A platform where, in all the gilded pomp
Of pigmy grandeur, little giants stand.
If Douglas be the western Brobdignag,
What little Liliputians are we all !
The torch of genius shines not in his eyes ;

The gods have set no seal upon his brow ;
His speeches have no spirit in their words —
Mere mobs of syllables devoid of souls !
Thoughts are to words what souls to bodies are ;
But Douglas is ambitious, and aspires
To highest honors, though deserving none.
He sacrificed the freedom of his state,
Made it the byword of a mocking world,
The most inhospitable spot on earth,
The black sheep in the bleating flock of states,
That he might gain the presidential chair !
He purchased a plantation tilled by slaves,
And fattened on the negro's blood and sweat.
Gold was his gospel, and the lash his law,
Office his heaven, and power and pelf his wish,
His farm the only empire that he ruled,
And ragged slaves the subjects he oppressed.
He was the emperor of a gang of blacks ;
His driver his prime minister of state,
Who left his mark upon the rising race.
This great king of a Mississippi swamp
Divorced sad husbands from their weeping wives ;
Snatched screaming infants from their mothers' arms ;
Scourged white-haired dames and venerable men ;
Erased God's image from the face divine ;
Extinguished hope within the human breast ;
Trod on the necks of most obsequious slaves,
And crushed their hearts beneath a tyrant's heel !
He counterfeits the autograph of God
Upon the charter of our sacred rights,
And signs deeds for the priceless soul of man.
Now he, who forges the Almighty's name,
Would make Nebraska like his own domain —

A vast plantation filled with suffering slaves!
Shall the free winds that sweep her grassy vales
Be burdened with the groan of sad despair?
Shall the free waves that wash her fertile shores
Blush with the blood that runs from furrowed backs?
Shall her tall mountains crowned with sparkling snow
Become red altars for the slaughtered slave?
Shall her green valleys be the early grave
Of Freedom, or the cradle of the free?
Shall her broad rivers, rolling to the deep,
Shout Liberty's inspiring song for aye,
Or slink to the old Ocean's arms to hide
Their stains behind his ample cloak of waves?
Shall her vast plains and prairies, filled with flowers
As glorious night is filled with gleaming stars,
Be cleared, and ploughed, and hoed, and reaped by
slaves?

Let pulpit, press, platform, and people speak!
Thank Heaven, New England's pulpit speaks at last!
Her trumpet tones are heard throughout the land,
And sordid tyrants tremble when they hear
The echo of the revolution's voice!
From the Green Mountains and the Granite Hills,
From velvet valleys and from seagirt isles,
Where steeples point like fingers to the sky,
The heralds of the cross speak out like men.

For others' weal these good men labor,
And not for fame or paltry pelf;
They mind the maxim, "Love thy neighbor
As much as thou dost love thyself."
Yes, they would make this dark world better
Than 'twas the day it gave them birth,

By breaking every yoke and fetter,
And spreading light and truth on earth.

And should their feeble brothers stumble,
And often fall upon the road,
Though poor, despised, and black, and humble,
They'll raise them up and point to God.
They heal the heart that's almost broken ;
They light up hope and banish fear ;
With gentle accents, kindly spoken,
They heal the wound and dry the tear.

Such are our best and bravest, wisest men,
Who in the name of the great God they serve
Sent their remonstrance to our senate room ;
Men of vast learning, talent, taste, and skill,
Whose thrilling eloquence has charmed the church ;
Whose classic works have won immortal fame ;
Whose noble deeds are known in earth and heaven ;
Whose influence, like the light, inwraps the world.
They stand where Emmons and where Channing stood,
In Boston, Charlestown, Concord, Lexington,
Where our brave fathers' loftiest landmarks stand :
But their petition was received with scorn !
Douglas, with bar-room slang and Billingsgate,
Bespattered them in most insulting speech,
Until the atmosphere of Washington
Was fetid as the air when nameless beasts
Befoul it with imodorous defence :
When lo, a polished, ministerial man,
Once the Apollo of the sacred desk,
With pleasant face and most polite address,
Arose, and then with gracious smiles and speech

Showered honeyed compliments on all around.
His mouth was sweet as Hybla's ancient hive ;
His words as musical as golden bees.
He hoped the "giant" would not strike him back —
He humbly begged his pardon in advance,
And then apologized with crimson cheeks
For the remonstrants and their reckless course !
Hoped Douglas would forgive both them and him.
But Houston bared his bosom to the storm ;
The gallant Texan stood before the world
The champion of New England clergymen !
And Douglas staggered 'neath his ponderous blows,
While Everett, shivering, showed his lack of "GRIT."

Who ever saw such times as these ?
Stripes on our slaves, stripes on our flags ;
Our blacks wear gyves, our whites wear gags ;
And half the nation on its knees
Implores the other half, that scorns
Freedom betrayed and crowned with thorns.

Dust of our fathers, rise in deeds !
For these are times that try the soul,
While parties plan and cliques control,
And men bow down like broken reeds,
And demagogues reforge the chains
Our fathers broke on Concord plains !

Is Massachusetts so bereft ?
The spirit of our sires has fled,
And nothing of the noble dead
Save their "dumb ashes" here is left :

And when we see the Charlestown stone
Must we reflect that freedom's gone ?

No, we have brave and honest men
On whom the Pilgrims' mantles fell ;
True heirs of freedom, fit to dwell
Where never clanks the hateful chain ;
Unlike the men, with hearts of rock,
Whose platform is an auction block !

There is a voice from Bunker's Hill,
A thunder shout from Faneuil Hall,
Where patriots' portraits light the wall,
And the church steeples are not still ;
And words of warning cross the sea,
While Europe struggles to be free !

The Press — the Press — the free, untrammelled Press
Spoke out the bold reformers' earnest prayer ;
Thus anti-slavery sentiment was born !
The mob, a monster without head or heart,
Assailed our Wilberforce with sticks and stones
Instead of arguments and stubborn facts ;
With Cromwell's courage and with Luther's zeal
He wrote, and heart pulsations moved his pen
And starred his paragraphs with gems of thought ;
His style and sentiment were pure and strong ;
In prose and verse, at home, abroad, he wrote ;
His words fell like a rain of quenchless fire
Upon our nation, slumbering in its sins ;
And when it woke it pelted him with scorn !
Around him stood a fearless, faithful band,
Who coveted the rude and ruffian blows

Aimed at their gallant leader's heart and head.
One, with soft, golden hair, and brow of Jove,
And eyes magnetic as the evening star,
With silver voice poured forth the sweetest strains.
One, cradled on the lap of luxury,
Whose honored name shines through our history's
page,

Heedless of *caste*, or fame, or Fortune's smile,
Stood by our hero's side and shared his fate.
"Fair women and brave men" of every rank
Flocked round the waving standard of the free.
Then came a tall, pale man, with eyes of flame :
A broad brim flung its shadow o'er his face ;
A suit of sober hue inwrapped his form :
A quiet Quaker he, the prince of song,
Whose harp notes cheered and charmed the bold and
brave

Reformers harnessed for the moral war.
Thus, step by step, the holy cause moved on,
Pavilioned with God's sheltering clouds by day
And led by fiery pillars in the night.
The red sea has been crossed, and we have reached
The shore where only little Anaks stand
Between true heroes and the promised land.
In this broad land the giant mountains rise
With base on earth and summit in the skies ;
And here the rivers roll their waves along,
And here Niagara shouts her ceaseless song.
Here woodland, prairie, lake, and rock, and isle,
With birds, and brooks, and flowers responsive smile ;
And Nature speaks from sky, and earth, and sea,
God made these hills, and vales, and waters free !
O glorious land ! beneath a golden sky
Where banners wave and Freedom's eagles fly,

Gay be thy flowers and green thy vales and hills,
And fruitful be the soil free labor tills!
But, hark! a voice falls on the aching ear —
Cain beats and binds his brother even here!
The blood of bondmen stains both soil and sea,
And men are fettered where the beasts are free.

PART III.

WHENCE this insatiable thirst for fame?
Fame is a sea which will not seek the spray
Lost on the shore that flings its billows back;
Fame is a sun which will not leave its sphere
To seek the gnat that sported in its beam;
Fame will not seek us in our sodded home
When the red sea of life has ceased to dash
Against its trembling shore of flesh and bones,
And when the sun of life, unclouded now,
Sinks out of sight behind the churchyard mound.
But vile ambition, that would sacrifice
The rights of unborn nations for a toy,
Deserves from all unmitigated scorn.
I knew a man whose merits did not raise
Him to the lofty seat he could not fill:
He was a buzzard in an eagle's nest;
He wavered like a feather in the wind,
Yet soared so high he showed his nakedness.
Ambitious man! if fickle Fame should press
A golden trumpet to her lips of air,

And sound his name throughout the wondering world
Until it filled the earth, as yonder moon
Fills all the space 'twixt clod and cloud with light,
And mothers called their children by his name,
And sculptors in Carrara carved his bust,
While poets praised him in immortal verse,
And nations named their capitals from him,
Until his broad-mouthed appetite was gorged,
Would fell Disease respect his laurelled brow ?
Could scowling Death be bribed to spare his life ?
Would bannered angels with their golden harps
Echo the brazen-throated fame of earth ?
The ocean swallows streams, then puts its lips
Of sand against the river's mouth for more,
Clasping the green banks in its ardent arms,
Until at last the jealous moon comes forth
From her white chamber in the lofty sky,
And with her wand drives back the wanton waves.
Fame is the restless ocean in his breast,
To which all other passions flow like streams,
Which no pale planet in the sky can guide.
He was a dizzy, mediocre man,
Whose friends wore custom collars on their necks :
This man betrayed Nebraska with a kiss !
I knew one old, and oleaginous,
A fat wick in a lamp, large and opaque,
Whose flame was like the ignis fatuus' light, —
A flash, a lantern, or a mimic star, —
Which lures the patriot in the path of doom.
Nature had dowered him with her choicest gifts ;
The nation crowned him with her fairest wreaths.
He was the Democratic oracle,
And canonized in all their calendars,
And when he spoke the country bowed its ear ;

But when this mastodon of modern men
Stood on the line between the north and south,
Just like a starving ass between the stacks,
The million monster, with its Argus eyes,
Saw through the motives of the famous chief.
It was not that he loved Nebraska less,
But that he loved the presidency more :
He gave his voice and vote for tyranny.
Our sister state, the maiden Michigan,
Blushed like a crimson sunset for his shame.
Now, when he dies, his monument must be
A bale of cotton and a broken sword ;
A letter which he wrote, his epitaph.
But there are men, without the mark of Cain,
Who'd rather suffer wrong than "wrong pursue" —
The well-born heroes of the human race.
Behold that tall and senatorial form,
A noble soldier harnessed for the war !
Old age has crowned his venerable head
With snow, but left his manly heart unchilled.
As sun and moon stood still while Joshua fought,
So will our northern lights illumine the path
Of this brave chieftain of the broad, free west.
Among the "foremost men" in all this land
The great MISSOURIAN stands preëminent —
A man whom gold can neither buy nor bribe,
Nor smoothfaced flattery with soft tongue seduce,
Nor threats from bullies can intimidate,
Nor domineering clans and cliques control.
He stamps upon the platforms of the age,
And shivers into splinters every plank ;
He snaps asunder party rules and ties
As Samson did the cords which bound his limbs ;
He scorns the caucus gatherings, and derides

The noisy demagogues who nominate
The few who fatten at the public crib ;
And he would run the river of reform
Through all the Augean stables of the state.
Where is the man, with brass and brains, to face
This scarred and battered statesman in debate ?
Who has the skill to tilt a lance with him ?
A statesman, scholar, hero, gentleman ;
In council wise, in battle always brave ;
Chivalrous, courteous, generous, and frank —
No little giant on a negro's back ;
No pigmy up for sale upon the block ;
No swaggering braggart schooled in Billingsgate ;
No northern doughface with a cotton heart.
He is the southern Nestor of the race ;
The king of statesmen, since the *trio* died.
“ Old Bullion ” is no disrespectful name ;
His words are gold, coined in the mint of mind,
Like a stout oak, amid the blasting storm,
Which looks through buds into the time to come,
When forests folded in its acorn cups
Shall be the glory of the hills and plains.
He stands, while prostrate monarchs strew the vale
And trembling Titans lean upon his boughs ;
And with the prophet's vision he foresees
His hopes upgrown to stern realities.
As a bold promontory on the coast
Of a tumultuous sea looms up and flings
Its shadow like a wing upon the waves
And bares its bosom to assaulting storms,
Unshaken by the elemental strife,
So stands the “ Greatheart ” * of our “ holy war ”

* Gerrit Smith.

Calm and serene amid the raging fight.
His soul shines in his firmament of eye,
As the bright sun shines in yon azure arch --
A model man, with frame of perfect mould,
And heart so large, that, if his form were less,
'Twould batter down its walls of flesh and blood,
And let an angel pass its crimson gates.
Contrast him with dissembling demagogues
Who bend their supple knees to lick the hand
Which holds the "starvelling office or the vote ;"
Who weep and laugh, and swear and pray, by turns,
To suit the changing temper of the times --
Amphibious animals, who chiefly live
On office, rum, and vile tobacco juice !
Compare him with the patronizing snob
Who bows before the golden calf of wealth ;
Who recognizes gilded vice with smiles ;
Walks through the crowded streets with splendid sin,
But turns his head when met by honest worth.

PART IV.

THE blushing sun hid its indignant face
Behind the free hills of the blooming west.
It seemed red with the human blood absorbed
From lands soaked with the sweat and tears of slaves,
Where canes grow for the toiler's aching back
And sugar sweetens the proud tyrant's cup ;
Where the white cotton blooms like mimic snow,

Not for the naked negro's bleeding loins,
But for the lily lords who will not toil
Nor spin, though Solomon was not arrayed
Like them in all his glory and his pomp.
And when the waves of light had ebbd away
The tide of night flowed in and filled the land,
And covered up the fresh and bleeding wounds
That plead like piteous lips for liberty.
God heard the blood that shrieked to Heaven for help,
And held the flaming north star in his hand,
And sent an angel down to tell the slave
To follow where the torch of Freedom led.
The negro from his humble cabin crept
While echo slumbered and the dogs were dumb :
The north star crowned the lofty hills he climbed
And watched his weary footsteps o'er the plain.
Day broke and found him in the forest shade,
Where the low bushes fed him with their fruit
And the soft moss invited him to rest,
While cheerful birds sang songs to Liberty.
In vain with horse, and hound, and murderous gun
Pale pirates scoured the land for miles about.

The panting fugitive had reached the shores
Of a free state and dreamed that he was free.
But he, alas ! was seized by human hounds,
And, like a felon, dragged before the judge,
Charged with the crime of seeking liberty,
(Unpardonable sin in this free land !)
He and the judge were brothers in the church,
Sang the same songs, indorsed the same belief,
At the same altar bowed, and hoped to end
Life's dreary march in the same heaven at last.
That judge had power to heal his wounds and wipe

The tears which ploughed deep channels in his cheeks ;
But he betrayed his brother for a vote,
And scorned the holy charter God had signed,
Sealed, and delivered to the race of man.
He might have made the young West blush with pride,
And twined a laurel round her lovely brow ;
He might have thrilled a nation's heart with joy,
And with brave Ingraham shared the honest fame
Bestowed by an appreciating world.
But he, a timid and timeserving man,
Feared the proud south more than he loved his God.
He rent the stripes from Freedom's starry flag,
And scourged his brother in the courts of law.
With his white hands that morning clasped in prayer
He locked the clanking chains upon the slave ;
With knees that bowed before the throne of Heaven
He knelt upon a Christian's heaving breast
Until his broken heart oozed out in tears ;
With lips that asked a blessing on his meal
He doomed the black to hopeless servitude.
Yes ; he would send all Afric's sable sons
Back into bondage were they brought to him ;
And all her dusky daughters, were they pure
As his own children fair, he would return
To the slave driver's harem at the south.
Out of such facts Nebraska's chains were forged :
May God ordain that they shall not be worn !
Old Massachusetts proudly said, the slave
Will find asylums in the Old Bay State.
This was her loudest boast ; just hear her song :—

Shall the poor bondman, from oppression flying,
Be hunted here with bloodhounds on his track,

O'er valleys where our fathers' bones are lying,
Because he's black?

Shall priest and statesman climb the tapering steeple
At Concord to behold the wondrous chase,
To see black Kossuth and our own white people
Running a race?

And when the slave is bleeding in their clutches,
Shall we light bonfires for the men so brave,
And crown with laurel they who did as much as
Catch a poor slave?

God bless old Massachusetts! She will never
Hunt panting negroes o'er her classic plains;
She's true to Freedom, and she will forever
Spurn bribes and chains.

Her free-born sires, brave sons, and angel daughters
Speak from the rocky hill and rolling wave,
In tones loud as Niag'ra's stormy waters,
God speed the slave!

Here man's more sacred than the constitution;
Tyrants and traitors now are blanched with fear
Because the spirit of the revolution
Still lingers here.

An armless hand is writing on the plaster;
Belshazzar, drunken, cannot read the sign.
Meanwhile the sable slave outwits his master,
Who's steeped in wine.

We have a Daniel to translate the letters
Which burn like lightning on the southern wall,
While their false prophets now are forging fetters
For those who fall.

The footsore slave, sad, battered, and heartbroken,
Finds freedom and a safe asylum here,
And gentle words from pleasant faces spoken,
And friends sincere.

Such was her song ; but when the negro came
They hunted him through Boston's classic streets
Until the stones beneath his feet cried "Shame!"
Descendants of white slaves* like dogs pursued
The fugitive and harnessed him with steel ;
He asked for freedom, and they gave him chains.
That was a dark day in our history ;
The sun of Freedom was in black eclipse ;
But then, thank God, the brightest stars shone out,
And scared Conservatism's bats and owls !
O that the constant ticking clock of Time
Could be turned back, or that sad day be struck
Forever from the records of the past !
Why, drizzling Friday at a hanging time,
Or even starless Night, alive with ghosts,
Would be fair weather and fine scenery
Contrasted with that ill-born imp of Time !
Two dozen guilty hours skulked slowly by ;
Each one was sixty wicked minutes long ;
Each moment was a traitor and a thief.

* In the early settlement of Boston numbers of white persons were sold for debt, and some of their descendants were the most efficient enemies of the slave.

That day fair Liberty was cloven down
Beneath the shadow of old Fanueil Hall !
The Court House, even, wore a zone of chains,
While jailer, jurymen, and learned judge
Bowed down and crawled like cravens under it.
That was the chain which held the Union fast —
Let Curtis wear it as his coat of arms.
Its links are brightened for Nebraska's use !
Methinks the bust of Adams in the hall
Cried "Shame !" until the very plaster cracked,
Thus opening mouths for other tongues to shout.
Methinks the portraits shook their gilded frames,
And pointed at the hateful scene with scorn.
Who did not hear their withering rebuke ?
I will repeat it in unpolished rhyme : —

Have ye been rocked in Fanueil Hall,
The famous "cradle" of the free ?
And will ye hear your brother call
For help, and never heed his plea ?
Ye heap the granite to the skies
O'er heroes' graves on Bunker's Hill ;
But if the sleepers there could rise,
While men are slaves, would *they* be still ?

They would again renew their vows
To wipe away a nation's stain ;
And Warren's thrilling voice would rouse
The iron will of mighty men ;
They would relight their beacon fires
On old Wachusett's naked brow,
And clang the bells in all their spires,
While trumpets bray and torches glow !

Where are the sons of sires who cast
The taxéd tea chests in the sea ?
Where is the spirit of the past
Which moved the deep of sympathy ?
Would not oppression have been driven
Away, as sunshine drives the dew,
If, when your fathers went to heaven,
Their falling mantles fell on you ?

Descendants of the Pilgrim stock,
By all the free blood in your veins,
By all the prayers at Plymouth Rock,
Strike off the bondman's galling chains !
By all the blood your fathers shed,
By all the laurels they have won,
Stand up for freedom as they did
At Concord and at Lexington !

Freedom invites her armies forth,
And waves a flag of spotless white :
Up, freemen ! from your couch of sloth,
And forthwith harness for the fight !
By every stripe and every star
Our banner shows on land or sea,
Let every man list in the war,
And fight till all mankind are free !

What cared officials for the warning voice ?
Their creed was this : First worship gold, then God ;
Make sure of wealth, then turn your thoughts to
heaven ;
Heed not the "higher law," but men in power ;
Rise, though you stand upon your brother's neck —

The constitution now, and conscience next ;
Souls cannot shine through skins of ebon hue,
So slavery is only abstract sin.
Such is the cruel creed of selfish men.
The errors and the vices of mankind
Are thieves which steal away their happiness.
Behold the miser worshipping his gold !
His stingy skin can scarcely hide his bones ;
His little eyes begrudge the light he needs ;
His toothless gums his hungry stomach starve ;
He knows, he fears, he loves no god but gold —
The mighty dollar is his deity !
His sacred Bible is the bank-note list !
The banker and the broker are his priests ;
The mint a model of his paradise ;
If air cost cash he would refuse to breathe ;
He values heaven because the streets are gold ;
And, like a grovelling grub, he dies at last
Smothered and starved beneath his yellow dust !
Behold the idiotic, slaving sot !
His parched mouth like a fiery oven burns ;
His veins are vipers plunging fevered fangs
Into his blood, which flows like liquid fire ;
Day is a demon scourging him with light,
Night a black ghost which scares him with her stars,
Life a dark ocean lashed with angry storms,
Death a deep gulf which terminates in hell !
But the base miser's and the drunkard's sins
Whiten to innocence compared with those
The God-forsaken demagogues commit :
They'd drench a state in rum to gain their end,
Kidnap a negro or betray a friend,
Profess religion or profane the church,

And veto God's commandments for a vote.
I've seen them flock around our Capitol
As thick as Egypt's lice, and frogs, and flies,
Crawling in crowds along the public street,
Buzzing in house and hall, hotel and mart,
Croaking in secret conclave with their clan,
Flying from post to post in search of game ;
Heads of departments itched, and scratched them off,
But those which were not crushed crawled on again.
They lit on every officer of state,
And buzzed petitions at their aching ears.
These frogs from bread troughs and from ovens
croaked ;
Pierce found them in his chamber night and day ;
Not even Caleb could have " crushed " them out.
God speed the time when plagues like these shall pass
Away, and ne'er return to plague us more !
These men for place or pay would now enslave
Nebraska, Kansas, and New England, too !

PART V.

THE sun, wrapped in a shroud of golden mist,
Dropped out of sight, and left the widowed sky
In sable robes, without a single star
To light the dark and lonely solitude,
When from within a cave of murky clouds
The ruffian wind stole out, on mischief bent.
At midnight, while reposing on my couch,

The robber wind came banging at my door,
And shook my lattice till the ringing glass
Pealed out like bells held in the fairy hand
Which wrote the flourishes in frostwork there.
Boreas, like a blustering burglar, came,
Thrusting his arm through every open pane,
Rattling the blinds and scaring sleep away,
Unhinging swinging gates and creaking signs,
Lifting the chimney to his lips of air,
And blowing trumpet blasts in every tube.
He woke a rose-lipped maiden from her dreams ;
Then from the mast he shook her sailor boy
Into the watery grave he scooped for him ;
Returning then on wings invisible,
Shrieked in her ears the story of his death.
This wanton wind snatched from our flag the stars,
Leaving the stripes upon the trembling staff.
He bowled the billows o'er the sandy beach,
And made the mountain shake beneath the shock.
Winter had made a pauper of the earth,
And the wind tore its brown and tattered dress ;
So that the patches white of driven snow
Looked like a wretched beggar's under robe
Seen through the ragged mantle which he wears.
Blow till ye "split yer lungs" and "crack yer
cheeks ;"
Pluck down the wood kings by their long, green hair ;
Strew all the coast with mast, and spar, and sail ;
Unroof the humble dwellings of the poor ;
Disrobe the fugitive on th' unsheltered plain,
And blow his torch and soul out with thy breath.
For all these sins thy punishment is sure ;
Nor day, nor night, nor on the land nor sea

Shall thy tired wings find peaceful rest for aye.
And thou shalt be a slave for all that live,
Grinding the corn and carrying the pack ;
While flower, and herb, and tree will toss their heads
In scorn and hiss thee on thy restless way.
Thy moan shall move no heart to pity thee ;
Thy shriek awake no sign of sympathy.
Art thou the conscience of this wicked world,
Or evil spirit from some star above,
Or unimprisoned fiend from flames below ?
Whate'er thou art, we fear thee not, ill wind ;
God holds thee in the hollow of his hand,
And he can chain thee in thy cave of clouds,
Or make thee harp upon the towering pines,
Or from thy pinions scatter sweetest balm.

Amid the pipings of the storm
I heard a woman's fearful cry ;
A lightning flash revealed her form :
" O God ! " she cried, " where shall I fly ? "
She passed my window when the light
Streamed o'er the sky, from east to west ;
Her face was wet with tears of fright ;
She held an infant at her breast.

Then shouting thunder shook the arch
Where often glowed the evening lamp,
As though the battle gods did march
Above that floor with Titan tramp ;
And spouting fire broke from the clouds
That sailed before the wailing air,
Like helmless ships with sable shrouds,
On cloudy billows heaving there.

The moaning wind and rain that came
Came knocking at my cottage door ;
The thunder spoke with tongue of flame,
"In Christ's name help the hunted poor !"
I gave that mother and her child
A welcome to my home and hearth ;
The dusky babe looked up and smiled
On me, the happiest man on earth !

I dressed the raw and reeking wounds,
That seemed their own sad tale to state,
Torn by the teeth of broad-mouthed hounds,
Then baying at my garden gate.
I would not let the hunter come,
With whip, and gun, and gag, and chain,
To desecrate my humble home,
But left him to the winds and rain.

The tempest fled on fiery wing ;
The dark night slowly passed away ;
The song birds made the woodlands ring
With anthems to the new-born day.
The thunder shaft had left no scars
Upon the blue and boundless sky ;
And I unfurled the flag of stars,
And gave the praise to God on high.

There is a railroad running under ground,
A subterranean route to royal lands,
Which God lights up with rows of shining stars.
Its cars are filled with freedom-seeking slaves,
Who run the gantlet of rapacious mouths,
Amid the booming storm of leaden rain,

To reach a monarchy in search of rights
Denied them by pseudo republicans.
The negro loves the lion and unicorn
Because they guard his promised paradise,
And hails with shouts of joy the Union Jack,
Which waves like a delivering angel's wing,
And welcomes him to the fair Queen's domain,
Where color is no crime, crisped hair no sin ;
Where impious men won't dare to criticize
The wisdom and the taste which God displayed
In making of one blood the blacks and whites.
For him our flag has stripes without the stars ;
Our eagle is a vulture at his breast ;
Our pole a cross where he is crucified ;
And our free soil a northern hunting ground,
Where vile officials scent the Afric smell,
And, with suspicious noses on the ground,
Pursue the game with barkings of delight !
I've seen pack after pack of hungry dogs,
With collars on their necks, and names thereon !
When Fillmore puckered up his mouth, they pricked
Their ears before he got the whistle out ;
And when at length the shrill, sharp sound was heard,
Their savage yelpings made the welkin ring.
Why, I could fill this waiting page with names
Of mastiffs, curs, and most illustrious dogs :
COTTON, a fat, sleek spaniel, that could bark
With voice so musical it charmed the ear ;
He was too fat or too polite to run,
Therefore he gently jogged along behind.
UNION, a mastiff with ferocious mouth,
Whose angry bark awoke the slumbering hills,
Was always first and foremost in the chase ;

His flabby jaws were red with human blood.
COMMERCE, a most sagacious dog, who barked
With so much dignity one would have thought
He knew enough to speak, perhaps to vote !
STATESMAN, a cunning dog, most like a fox ;
He never led, but followed in the pack,
And barked just like the echo of the rest,
And bit the victim with the whitest teeth.
LAW, an unfeeling and relentless cur,
Whose fevered fangs were cooled in human blood.
TASTE, a white lapdog from a lady's knee,
Whose piping voice amused both mice and men.
SMELL, with a small pug nose and great long ears,
Sneezed often when he should have barked aloud.
SIGHT, a scared puppy, howling in the dark ;
And minor dogs too numerous to name.
But all these watchful dogs could not prevent
Th' escape of hunted freemen to the north.

A poor down-trodden slave one night
Resolved that, ere the morrow's light
Should beam on him, he'd take his flight,
 Whatever might betide him :
He bade his weeping wife good by,
Then dashed a soft tear from his eye,
Looked at the star up in the sky,
 And said that star should guide him !

And then beneath the silver gleam
He climbed the hill and swam the stream
To realize a golden dream
 Of happiness and freedom :
When negro night brought forth pale day

The fugitive stopped on his way,
And where the footsore traveller lay
There were no friends to heed him.

He slept beneath the broad, blue sky :
The sun blazed in the heavens on high ;
The wood bird sang his lullaby :
He dreamed of chains he'd riven ;
But when he woke in that lonesome place
Gaunt hunger stared him in the face ;
And yet he still pursued the race,
Led by that light in heaven !

He scared the wild beast from his lair ;
And daylight found him resting where
No knotted scourge his flesh could tear,
Nor bugle blast could rout him :
Bark, buds, and berries were his food,
Sharp briars and brambles paved his road,
While slimy snake and rusty toad
Hissed and crawled about him !

Bloodhounds are baying on his track ;
Red grow the scars which seam his back :
God speed the poor hound-hunted black,
That he may fly the faster !
He springs into the leaky skiff ;
And though his limbs are sore and stiff
He hoists the sail ; winds fill the reef
And bear him from his master !

No sight on all this earth is more sublime
Than deep Niagara shouting to the slave,

Baptizing him in Freedom's silver spray
And folding him in robes of golden mist,
Arching his passage to the promised land
With rainbows such as emperor's never saw
In their triumphal marches through the world.
Who can translate the thunder of the wave
Unwinding like a river from the rock ?
Who read the radiant autograph of God
Written in beauty on its wrinkled brow ?
"The sound of many waters" who can still
As Jesus stilled the billows of the sea ?
I stand and tremble on its awful brink,
Shuddering at shadows of my nothingness.
My thoughts are flighty as the birds which sweep
And scream in circles round my dizzy head.
These rocky walls are God's own mason work,
Where he has chronicled the epochs past ;
That cloud which hovers like an angel's wing
Is the great, spotless flag of Peace unfurled
Betwixt the mightiest nations of the earth.
Just like a burnished sickle in the sun,
The river reaps the fetters from the slave —
His fiery pillar is the bright north star ;
His guide by day Niagara's sheltering cloud.
From lake to lake these wondrous waters flow,
As human love from heart to heart should run,
Uniting them with ties as bright and true
As those which bind in peace the pure in heart.
O that I were a flower, to bloom and breathe
My little life away upon its banks !
Would that I were a bird, to soar and sing
In this sunlighted shower of gleaming pearls !
Here beauty and sublimity are wed.

As Moses dropped his sandals from his feet,
So here must yokes and gyves be cast aside —
For God is here, and this is holy ground !

PART VI.

Is it fit labor for the life of man
To eat, and drink, and sleep, and nothing more ?
Were head, and hands, and brains, and bones designed
Merely to pack our mouths and pockets full ?
Who has not seen a man, of six-feet height,
Whose father's purse was fat with current coin,
Move like a scourging pestilence about ?
Barbers, instead of books, adorned his head ;
Cooks and confectioners supplied his taste ;
And good things went whence good things never came.
He was the haberdasher's dry goods sign ;
St. Crispin put the polish on his boots ;
His feet reflected, though his head did not ;
The tailor winked, and praised his " perfect " form ;
No other man his habits could improve.
He drank as though the passage through his throat
Was hollow as his little, hollow heart.
Sometimes such men are sent to Washington.
Now, paradoxical as it may seem,
They often speak aloud, yet nothing say.
Good game are they for bullying duellists ;
For when they fall and die nobody's killed.
Thank God, we have another class of men !
They rise like lofty mountains from the plains,

Crowned with a diadem of glowing stars ;
Plain is their dress and simple is their meal ;
Their libraries, not larders, fill their thoughts ;
Their words go forth like wingéd oracles ;
Their counsels guide and govern all the state.
Yes ; I could gem this little telltale book,
Which fools will spit upon and spurn with hate,
With most illustrious names of noble men.
Chase truly is the giant of the west ;
His broad, white forehead is the bank of thought
Which discounts only purest gold of mind ;
And his large eyes light up his pleasant face
As stars illuminate the cloudless sky.
Sumner, upon whose ample shoulders fell
The mantle of a sainted patriot,
Has won green laurels and a golden name.
Seward, wise in council and discreet in war,
Though minimum in person, yet we know
His influence proves him maximum in power.
And Smith has proved himself True-man indeed
In fair Nebraska's sorest time of need.
God bless our Wades, and all the earnest host
Who live in deeds, and not in windy words !
But southern men see not with northern eyes :
Chains on a "servant's" fettered hands appear
Handsome as bracelets on a lady's arm ;
Yokes, locked upon the negro's "stubborn" neck,
As beautiful as Fashion's silk cravat ;
An ebon back, seamed o'er with frightful scars,
A sight as pleasant as a parchment map ;
Tears streaming down an Afric's dusky face
Are far too vulgar to excite their grief.
And southern men hear not with northern ears :

The shriek of sad despair from breaking hearts
Would startle them no more than whistling winds.
There are exceptions to this sweeping rule.
The native southron is a nobleman
Contrasted with the turncoat of the north,
Who starves, and whips, and works his slaves to
death.

He has not southern hospitality,
Which covers up a multitude of sins ;
He has not southern magnanimity,
Which, like the angel in the sepulchre,
Shines forth whene'er the stone is rolled away ;
And he has not the southern chivalry,
Which cowards dread and gallant men admire.
I speak not of the bullies who provoke
A challenge with the murderous intent ;
But basswood men, such as Connecticut
Brands with rebuke and burns in effigy —
Such as New Hampshire punished at the polls.
They've granite hearts, and souls devoid of grit,
And on the gibbet of remark should swing
As warnings at the cross roads of the world.
O, what a strange and busy age is this !
I take my standpoint where I read its fate,
And see its panorama moving past ;
There where the bloated custom house looms up
Like an obese and lazy officer,
Our " gallant " Guthrie cut off Bronson's head.
Since then his pale and bleeding ghost was seen,
Like a stained shadow from its winding sheet.
Though doomed by " hards " and damned by all the
" softs,"
He could not rest within his narrow grave

Until he cursed Nebraska and the "prince."
O favored prince, take warning and be wise !
Lust not for office or emolument ;
Speak up for Freedom and strike off the gyves,
Or else the jolly Duke of York will be
A weasel nailed upon the barn-yard gate.
There stands the trumpeter on Brooklyn's heights,
A sleepless watchman on the Church' high walls,
Whose thunder blasts have shaken all the state,
Until reverberating echoes sound
As though the deep responded to the deep.
Here stands a herald on the Trimount hills,
Whose words are echoed round the list'ning world.
Upon a firm and lofty tribune stands
One of the noblest champions of reform,
Whose wingéd words like grateful manna fall
To feed with mental food the multitude.
There, too, is God's black servant, Uncle Tom,
Who preaches from the press to all the earth.
Never was preacher honored so before :
His temple, built by God, holds all the race.
See lords and ladies, dukes and knights, and squires,
Proud emperors, and gilded kings and queens,
With crowns of glittering gold and tossing plumes
Which look like royal heads run up to seed,
Armies and navies in gay uniform,
War buds, which blossom out in smoke and fire,
With parliaments and people, throng to hear
The thrilling story of a simple slave !
These instruments, and such as these, have changed
The current of our nation's sentiment.
God grant the Pulpit and the Press may guard
Nebraska from the onslaught of her foes !